

Magazine Feature Section

PARIS TAKES Off its MOURNING GARBS



French Capital In Midst Of War Makes Desperate Effort to Regain Prestige As Fashion Center and the Modistes Are Putting Out Gay Costumes As the Americans Flock Back to the Boulevards

By a Paris Modiste.

Paris, the fashion-capital of the world, has put aside its garb of mourning and now is preparing for a season of gaiety, with styles of rather flamboyant hues predominating.

Since the outbreak of the war and the death of hundreds of Parisians in the trenches, this great capital has worn its garb of mourning and style was abandoned when the sombre black dress and veil was adopted in recognition of our heroes at the front.

But at present with things comparatively quiet on the front and but few deaths compared with a year ago, this great city is prepared to resume its air of gaiety for which it has been so long celebrated.

Paris has mourned as a city long enough for its dead and while the heroes are not forgotten the call of financial necessity bids Paris awaken.

When Paul Poiret, Paquin and Worth went to the front the dress designing business and the millinery business in the capital went a-begging and, with deep anguish covering the city, styles were forgotten in the demand for widow's weeds. The restaurants along the boulevards, where many Americans formerly slipped their cordials with an assumed Parisian air, were closed and many turned into hospitals. The life of gaiety for which the city was known all over the world died.

THINGS ARE CHANGING.

But now things are different. Americans have flocked to Paris from all parts of the continent. They have money and demand entertainment for it so Paris leaves a sigh and forgets its anguish, for Paris must live and with all factories shut down excepting those making war munitions, the people of the capital must labor now to gather in the honest dollars of the extravagant American tourists.

The rumor that no Americans would go abroad this year has been proved false beyond expectation. The lure of battle scenes brought even more than in former years.

It seems that every ship that arrives from across the Atlantic at Havre carries an unusual number of American tourists, who make the voyage in spite of all perils of submarines. While in some quarters it is estimated that the number of Yankee visitors is less than in former years, it is apparent here in Paris that all have plenty of money

and the city depends partly on gathering in these dollars for its support.

It is true, that the women have taken their places as street car conductors, mail carriers and even on the railroads, supplanting the men who are at the front. The women milliners and dress-makers have again assumed their rightful places as designers of fashion and all Paris is cheerfully donning their creations, which seem more elaborate than ever this year, everything being of strictly military character, even the hats bearing a resemblance to the caps worn by the French soldiers, and the coats having a sharp military cut, while the skirts are tight. Even in shoes has the military effect been felt, for instead of the high-heeled shoes for which the Parisians once were noted, stiff, heavy, yellow-leathered boots, such as the soldiers wear in the trenches are being worn by the Parisian women.

AMERICAN EXTRAVAGANCE.

Parisian designers are warning their American customers not to make the mistake of buying their costumes without due consideration, but there are thousands who neither know nor regard this plan. They purchase a whole costume for

an occasion without going home to think it over and the result usually is one of disaster.

Nothing is such an exhibition of extravagance as the useless frock that hangs in the closet waiting for its chance. No one is a seer in buying clothes and no dressmaker is above mistakes, no matter how high his or her price nor the importance of the position of her establishment, be it here in Paris or in any other country.

It would be far preferable to us designers and dressmakers of Paris to outfit our customers in accordance with our own dictates and in the way that most artistically suits the person to be fitted. If this were permitted every woman that left our stores would be a fashion plate that we could be proud of. We feel that each woman's case is different and that it should be studied. That we should be allowed not only to pick the material, but to design it to our own tastes.

Yet we are not permitted to do so. The American woman sets her mind on a certain dress and wants it, whether or not.

She is absolutely unreasonable in her demands, but all the persuasion in the world cannot convince her that her judgment is wrong and her

tastes shockingly inartistic.

For instance, you could never convince an angular woman that stripes will make her look even more angular than ever, or a robust woman that stripes will make it appear that she is better proportioned. Yet, if she would but follow the advice of the milliners and designers who are attempting to outfit her properly, she would appear a great deal more attractive. The American on his arrival in Paris believes that everywhere are designing men and women waiting as the Yankee says, "to sting him."

So when they come to the millinery stores or to the fashion parlors they enter with that same idea, that we intend to overcharge them. That is why they continually call for something cheaper when they must or at least should recognize that the first garment we display to them is the one most suited to their style of beauty.

Further, they do not realize that we have a reputation to sustain.

THE PARIS IDEA.

If we send out a garment that is not a creation, a masterpiece—Volla—the Americans laugh at our goods. So if we cannot pick out the styles and colors to match the beau-

ty of our client we must at least alter and re-alter to make it as perfect a fit and as rare a design as possible.

At the fashion show held recently at the chateau of Mrs. Herman Oelrich, the professional mannequins and the social celebrities both wore narrow skirts. At the smart dances there were no extra wide skirts, such as the shops have been selling and which once were the fashion. The celebrities either refused to follow a fashion they did not like or they wore their old gowns and the mannequins had moderately narrow skirts because the designers had so willed.

To struggle for months with floating skirts and necessary high boots, to have one's garments altered and seams let out and then go to the most fashionable spot in Paris and find women and designers had not let out a reef in any seam and went about unconcernedly with straight skirts that were comfortable, was jarring to many visitors to the fashion places of Paris.

Jenny, the Parisian designer, who insisted all last autumn on straight skirts and wide floating tunics of transparent materials, has put this design out again, especially in a frock of dark blue satin trimmed with gold braid. Will Callot prevail with straight skirts? Will the Russian skirt with its extraordinary shortness be considered a back fashion number when October starts?

As for bodices, there is a strong tendency to turn them all into short jackets as our ancestors did. New serge suits have fronts of thin materials or even colored satins, buttoned in front and loose backs that reach the hips and are squared off. Other models show slightly fuller fronts with bolero effects at the sides and back, the seams caught in quite sharply to give a decided flare. This is the line that has been followed since last Christmas and which will probably prevail during the coming season.

Sleeves will remain long but slightly full and lace will be used for them and for half yokes with high collars.

A FEW HINTS.

Silk will continue to be used in large quantities, also very soft serges. Woolens and Sutherland tweeds also will be popular.

It is positive that bright colors again will prevail in the fall and winter styles, with pink, green and yellow predominating, set off generally by black. Hats, small hats will predominate this season—very small hats will be in greatest demand. The larger hats will be used only for evening wear. Plumes will remain out of style as evidences of bad taste. The tails of birds of Paradise—not with the heads—will be very much in style. The prevailing material for hats is plush of tate-de-negre, which is a new brownish hue. Zepelin blue is to be very much used in hats and coats.

Long pointed shoes are going out of style and the short vamps are coming in. The shoes will be of the 18-inch military variety.

Veils with embroidered motifs will be used. Petticoats are to be wired to simulate a hoop-skirt in cases where wide skirts are to be employed.

With these decrees decided upon and with many others forthcoming, Paris is ready to take her place as the world leader of fashion this fall and winter. Her millinery and fashion shops are working overtime with seamstresses and designers, models and mannequins all busy preparing to send their goods to America and also for the sales in the city itself.

The cafes on the boulevards are lighted up, theaters have reopened and Paris once again has resumed her brilliancy and her night life has returned with her widow's weeds forgotten.